



# WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

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## TO THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

A RECENT CONFERENCE on Health Careers conducted by the San Diego County Medical Auxiliary was so intriguing, progressive and rewarding that to report upon it is a privilege. I do so, not alone for its impressive content, but also because it points up the aggressive actions that a component auxiliary of the state is taking, and because it may well serve as a pattern for similar projects throughout the state.

The purpose of the Health Careers Committee (formerly Nurse Recruitment Committee) is to acquaint school and employment councilors, parents, the community at large and, above all, the young people, with the sweep and challenge of career opportunities in the entire health field. The great need for paramedical personnel—dietitians, physiotherapists, medico-social workers and x-ray technicians, to mention but a few—is all too apparent. The Health Career program provides the medium through which the total pool of health manpower can be enlarged.

A major objective of this program should be the introduction of highly motivated young people into the possibilities of service of this type to their fellow men. By means of this enlarged project, the health leadership of the country is calling on new allies, is creating new tools and is building a new base for community action to enlarge the pool of health workers.

The San Diego County Auxiliary is the first in California, so far as I know, to promote a Health Career Conference. I should like to give you a capsule report of this conference.

Initially, the cooperation and support of the counselling departments of the high schools—public, private and parochial—in the city and county, were obtained. A hospital administrator was chosen to speak on the need for trained personnel, relationship of various jobs in the health field to one another, and the rewards of health careers. Exhibits depicting some of the health careers were presented. These exhibits were staffed by personnel in their chosen fields who presented demonstrations of procedures, materials and instruments employed in their work. Informative brochures covering such

questions as qualifications, educational requirements, salaries and scholarships were made available. In addition, films on the different health careers were shown. Following the film showing, the students were given practical demonstrations in hospitals and laboratories. In order to make the demonstrations as useful as possible, information outlining the various types of careers, was mailed to the students before the conference. Then, by means of a questionnaire the students were assigned to the facilities that most interested them.

The success of the conference was, in a large measure, due to the cooperation of all the many and varied exhibitors who represented nearly all aspects of medicine. Among the participants were the San Diego Dental Laboratory Association, San Diego Hospital Council, California League of Nursing, San Diego Dietetics Association, to mention but a few. The exhibits included a nursing booth demonstrating a late model incubator unit; an x-ray machine and view boxes and films together with an operational anode tube; speech and occupational therapy units demonstrating the aids employed to assist in training the handicapped; laboratory technologists demonstrating the preparation of tissues and bacteriological procedures.

It was the impression of the Auxiliary that the students' enthusiasm for the tours was owing in large part to the fact that the groups were small and were guided by hospital personnel who were prepared to answer questions.

The importance of this project is emphasized by the fact that 57 students requested appointments for revisits. These students spent a day at the school of nursing, laboratories and pharmacies. In addition, those who manifested an interest in medicine as a career were invited to spend a day with the interns at the hospitals.

The practical aspects of this program will be determined by a five-year survey conducted by the school systems to find out what fields the students who attended the conference finally enter.

The San Diego Auxiliary is to be commended. It is programs of this type—progressive, aggressive, thorough and stimulating—that best perform some of the public services in which the auxiliaries have a keen interest.

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California Medical Association*